

What's News ?

Thailand Film Office to Participate in Seville International Locations Expo



La Giralda famous landmark in Seville, Spain

The Thailand Film Office, seeking to capitalize on European interest in the merits of using Thailand locations for their feature films, commercials, TV programs, music videos, etc. will be represented at the first Seville International Locations Expo (SILE), which will run November 5- 8th, 2009 in Seville, Spain.

SILE is the first locations trade fair to be held in Europe. The event will be a meeting point for audiovisual producers and directors; as well as for exhibitors offering and promoting their locations to audiovisual industry representatives.

Sharing dates with the Seville European Film Festival, SILE aims to promote synergies between the two events. SILE is being held in cooperation with the Andalusia Film Commission.

"We will stress the role of Seville as a mid-November hub for the international film and TV industry," said Eduardo Corcuera, Seville Film Office general manager.

In 2008, Thailand registered 106 European productions shooting in the Kingdom, third largest group after first place Japan (134) and second place India (123) – a total of 526 productions that year. So far in 2009, with foreign productions looking to meet or surpass those of 2008, European productions lead with 58 being completed to date.

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Is Thailand Safe?

The best way we can answer this is by publishing a quote by the Prime Minister of Thailand, His Excellency Mr. Abhisit Vejjajiva, made at a Seminar entitled "Amazing Thailand, Amazing Value" June 2009, in Guangzhou, China:

"Ladies and Gentlemen,

I understand full well that one of the factors for most tourists in deciding their holiday destination is not only the comfort and convenience, but also safety.

I regret that the internal political situation in Thailand over the last couple of years might deter tourists from coming to our country. But rest assured that the government has every intention and determination to bring back Thailand's reputation as the land of smiles, the land of the free, and the land of opportunity. This is why as soon as my government took office, we have worked very hard to achieve reconciliation, unity and stability in our society. We have swiftly restored order. The country is now stable and peaceful, and we are as ready as ever to welcome our foreign guests....."



The answer ladies and gentlemen is a resounding YES, Thailand is safe! We can honestly say no production Thai or foreign has ever been in harm's way or delay caused by safety concerns.

So studio VP's for physical development and bonding agencies, please take note.

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Meet:

Sasisupa Sungvaribud, president, Foreign Film Production Services Association (FSA)



FIT: What is the Foreign Film Production Services Association (FSA) and what role does it play in the industry?

Sasisupa Sungvaribud: (SS): The Foreign Film Production Association or FSA as we are better known is a grouping of around 70 private sector companies and individuals that provide production services for foreign production companies that come to Thailand to shoot commercials, documentaries, feature films, TV productions, music videos and the like. All companies are registered with the Thailand Film

Office. FSA is an advocate for developing Thailand as a major international film location destination. We believe highly in providing ongoing training to enhance the skill set of our crews, encouraging our equipment rental companies to carry the most technologically advanced equipment while providing skilled technicians that can handle the equipment. We also interact with the Thailand Film Office, Office of Tourism Development as well as other branches of the government providing them input on the film industry as a whole. We represent the private sector at various markets and Festivals around the world.

FIT: From a foreign producer's perspective, what are the positive aspects of filming in Thailand?

SS: Every one of our clients remarks on how much money they have saved by shooting in Thailand. It is not a cliché - it is the truth. Clients also remark how professional our crews are and how much "fun" it is to work with them. Other than that, Thailand has a lot to offer, spectacular locations, one-of-a-kind culture and of course we are famous for our hospitality.

FIT: What are some of the common problems a foreign producer might have in filming in Thailand?

SS: Problems arise when foreign productions attempt to bypass hiring a local production services coordinator. Not so much that a coordinator was not hired but when there is a misunderstanding or a cultural gaffe made, there is no one there to get them out of the situation.

Costs can invariably be more expensive without a coordinator as, like in all location shoots, people may overcharge. And of course, most of all, regulations call for foreign production companies to go through the Thailand Film Office. Believe me, the little time it takes to go through the paperwork is well worth it if problems are encountered later on. And now with the Thailand Film Office's One Stop Service Center, it makes permits and permissions much faster and easier to obtain.

Another situation is some aren't used to the script approval process. A lot of countries don't care what you shoot, but Thailand is sensitive about cultural and religious issues for example.

However, it has been my experience that almost all of the scripts can get approval, as long as the producers and writers don't directly offend the country's sensibilities.

FIT: From a coordinator's perspective, what problems have you had working with foreign producers in Thailand?

SS: That is an interesting question. A Thailand based reporter recently asked Danny Boyle (jury president at the 2009 Shanghai International Film Festival) director of *The Beach* in Thailand in 2000 his experience filming in Thailand. Danny replied that he was naive thinking that he could take his 200 man crew into Thailand without understanding Thai customs or the way of doing business. Even though his crew hired a very experienced local coordinator, the production had very bad PR problems because of some mistakes made in shooting in national parkland. Danny said he learned from that experience so when he shot *Slumdog Millionaire* in Mumbai, he only took a small crew of 10 people with him – all others were local hire who knew the lay of the land.

In addition, some foreigners think that money can buy their way out of any situation, whereas in Thailand respect and a genuine appreciation will often get you much more than you asked for. Certain producers have a tendency to yell or talk down to their crew, which doesn't sit well with the Thai people. As long as they are courteous, foreign producers walk away with a positive attitude about shooting in Thailand.

FIT: Since foreign producers must utilize a Thailand Film Office certified coordinator how can the producers go about choosing a good coordinator?

SS: Like everything else one does in business, you need to spend a bit of time researching the various coordinators available. You should look at several criteria, first check to see if they are listed on the Thailand Film Office website. Certainly one criteria would be whether they belong to FSA - that way you know they are receiving the most up-to-date information and training. Another would be to take a look at their overall track record and then more specifically, with the type of production you will be shooting in Thailand. Check out their websites and showreels.

FIT: What changes are in store for the industry in Thailand? How will incentives improve the shooting climate in Thailand?

What's Up Private Sector ?

After working with **Benetone Films** on their forthcoming film "Blue", Shree Ashtavinayak Cine Vision Ltd. returned to Thailand once again to team up with Benetone Films and film the highly charged climactic action sequence for their next film "Luck".

"Luck" was shot primarily on location in South Africa but was drawn to Thailand for its final scene thanks to the economical cost of shooting and Benetone Film's ease of attaining production requirements. The shoot owes its success to a great deal of support from the State Railway Authority of Thailand and the help of actors, pilots, and pyrotechnic specialists provided by Benetone Films. The completed project captured a thrill packed, high energy sequence complete with planes, helicopters, and a jaw-dropping train explosion.

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photos courtesy of Benetone Films



top left: Volkswagen TVC shoot in, [Samutprakarn](#), Thailand with blue elephant october_film@mac.com

top right: LG TVC shoot in Bangkok, Thailand. The story of runaway bride with sport car. Shooting at [Nakhornprathom](#)

bottom left: Shoot in Bangkok at ABAC University

bottom right: Shoot at Suvarnabhumi Airport, Bangkok

october_film@mac.com



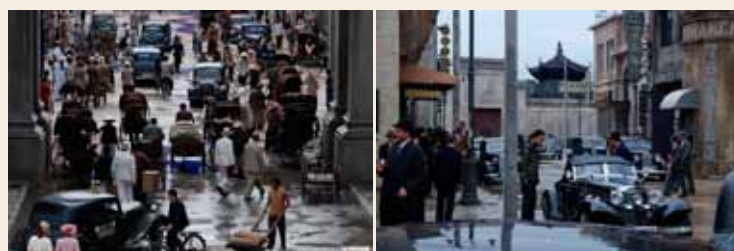
Shanghai Shot in Thailand

Chow Yun-fat strolls through wearing a white dress shirt, red tie, suspenders attached to his pinstriped gray pants while extras walk around in body-length robe-like traditional Chinese outfits. The streets are lined with cars and rickshaws.

After failing to get approval to shoot in China, The Weinstein Co. with the help of Bangkok based **Living Films** recreated the East-meets-West world of 1940s Shanghai on a movie set in the northern outskirts of Bangkok.

The Weinstein Co. relocated the project to London, after the Chinese government would not allow filming, where interior scenes were filmed, and the Thai capital of Bangkok, where 300 construction workers recreated old Shanghai's mix of western and Chinese motifs.

living@livingfilms.com



Shanghai set photos courtesy (c) Living Films



SS: Our government, despite the political problems is much more focused on both our domestic film industry and the role we can play as an international location destination. They now see the positive economic impact that can be made by the film entertainment industry. They have begun to take steps to raise the profile of this industry. You are reading this in an e-news letter that goes out to over 4,500 "players" in the industry world-wide. By year's end, Thailand will offer its first financial incentives to shoot productions here. The Film Office continues to have visitations from film commissions/offices of other nations who enquire about the possibility of setting up bilateral audio video treaties or MOUs. Given the reaction on the part of many international film commissions to the poor economy, Thailand is moving forward quickly while many others are retreating.

FIT: We understand you come from a well established, quite esteemed film family, tell us something of your background?

SS: I'm very proud of the work my family has contributed to the Thai film industry but I am a little shy to talk about them. My grandfather produced films and owned a cinema. Dad was a producer/production manager, while my mom was an actress. My entire family was also in the radio business led by my sister, a well known radio drama actress. My uncle was a camera man and now he and his son own a TV production company and a studio (Dara Video). And last but not least, my brother is an actor and a director.

FIT: Thanks for taking time to chat with us.

SS: Thank you for your interest.



Film Me

China in Thailand



Quick, looking at the picture above, is it Hong Kong or Bangkok? How about this one: Bangkok or Singapore?



Well, if you identified both pictures as Bangkok - that is correct! But looking at the pictures, it is hard to tell. Another reason film makers choose to film in Thailand, our locations can double for most anywhere in the world.

China has always played a leading role in the culture and heritage of Thailand and there are many architectural, cultural and lifestyle markers throughout Thailand. From food to temples, sports and daily activity to signs of Chinese deities and in Chinese characters, you will find them all here.



Chinese Opera plays in Thailand's countryside



A Chinese temple in Songhla



A Chinese temple in Khon Kaen



Along the banks of the Chao Praya River in Bangkok

Pitch It to Me

Thailand's Wild Rapids



This could have been the Wa River in Thailand instead of the Chattooga River, in Georgia, USA used in "Deliverance".

rafting expeditions in a tropical climate are simply great. No need for thermal wetsuits as the water is lukewarm. Lush tropical jungle, wild rivers, bamboo campsites, Thai smiles and gourmet food, as well as the likelihood of spotting wild animals, should make this a filming opportunity of a lifetime.

White water grades 1 thru 3 can be found on the Wa River in [Mae Charim National Park](#). Located in Nan province of Thailand, more than 700 years old, Nan town and province has many beautiful temple and also interesting cultural and historical sites. Nan National Museum is one of the best in Thailand.

Nan province is very mountainous and sparsely populated by Yao, Htin, Hmong, Thai-Lue and the primitive nomadic Mabri or Phi Tong Luang tribe who still migrate around in remote forest areas.



Sri Nan National Park photo courtesy backpacker 2007

Other Major White Water Location

Riding the rapids at Kaeng Hin Phoeng in [Prachin Buri province](#), is only possible during the rainy season when rivers and streams, fed by heavy rainfall and run-off from the mountains, are in full flow. Rocky cliffs towering over the upper reaches of [the Sai Yai River](#) force raging waters into a narrow trench. A wall of water

The other day on cable TV here in Bangkok, Deliverance was on. It made us think of white water rafting.

builds up before it surges downstream. In the middle section, an eroded river-bed is dotted with rocky outcrops. In the rainy season, torrential flows of water cascade over these scattered islets giving rise to cataracts. The raging river, is characterized by hydraulics, reverse eddies, spiral waves and other white-water challenges.

White-water rafting on the Sai Yai River starts a short distance above the Kaeng Hin Phoeng rapids and continues past Greater Kaeng Hin Phoeng, a 100-metre stretch of the river with swirling waves forging their way through rocky crevices.

The whitewater classification for Kaeng Hin Phoeng rapids ranges from Class 3 to 5, or from intermediate to expert level of white-water navigating skills and experience and requires extreme caution. The trip features six rapids — Kaeng Hin Phoeng, Kaeng Wang Nam Lom, Kaeng Wang Bon, Kaeng Luuk Seua, Kaeng Wang Sai and Kaeng Ngu Hao.

Kaeng Wang Nam Lom named after vegetation that grows in the wide stretch of the rapids. At the end of the stretch, water is forced through rocky islets and forms a 40-50 meter long Class 2 cataract.

Kaeng Luuk Seua, a Class 3 rapid, is a 60-metre stretch of the river characterized by torrential currents, the impact of which is intensified by rocky outcrops in the mid-stream.

At Kaeng Wang Bon, a minor rapid, powerful V-shaped waves frequently steer rubber rafts right into a mesh of bushes and protruding branches that line the banks of the river. While at Kaeng Wang Sai, rocky mounds of various sizes scattered throughout this 80-metre section of the river generate undulating waves. It takes sheer dexterity to steer the craft whilst dodging the obstacle course.



Prachin Buri information courtesy Tourism Authority of Thailand Region 8 Office

Now you know so come to Thailand and Film It!

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Want to be taken off our mailing list (we'll be sorry to see you go) – send us an email with Unsubscribe in the subject line.

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